

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY  
 INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BRINKLEY ON ABC-TV PROGRAM, "THIS WEEK WITH DAVID  
 BRINKLEY," WITH SAM DONALDSON AND GEORGE WILL  
 WASHINGTON, D.C.  
 SEPTEMBER 18, 1994

MR. BRINKLEY: Secretary Perry, thanks for coming.

SEC. PERRY: Thank you, David.

MR. BRINKLEY: Very pleased to have you.

SEC. PERRY: Good to be here.

MR. BRINKLEY: Now, you have been in all the meetings and you've heard about everything there is to hear. Give us an idea of where we stand. What is happening? What's going to happen, as you see it?

SEC. PERRY: Yesterday morning, David, the president held a video teleconference with all of his commanders in the field. And from each one of them, he got a report on their readiness. From that -- and then last night, after that, I went down to the -- visit one of our units right off the shores of Haiti. In fact, during the week, I visited perhaps 4,000 of our troops that are to be involved and all of our commanders in the field. One thing I can say with very great clarity is we are ready, and we're ready with a force -- we're ready with overwhelming military force. If the president directs us to apply that, we will be ready.

MR. BRINKLEY: One question we keep hearing -- in fact, we just heard it a minute or two ago -- we are wonderfully well equipped to go into Haiti and to achieve whatever we wish to achieve. We have all the power we need. Do we have a way to get out?

SEC. PERRY: The overall plan, David, has three different phases to it -- the first of

which is the entry. And the entry will either be forceable, or it will be semi-permissive, depending on the outcome of the meetings that are going on with President Carter and Senator Nunn and Chairman Powell. Once -- whichever way we go in, we're going to have a military force go in, even if we have an agreement, gained by President Carter, we are going in with a military force capable of defending itself. We are not going to entertain another Harlan County incident. So, we will go in with a substantial military force.

The second phase, then, once we are in and have achieved basically the military power, is to establish a security on the island -- and that means bringing up a police force. And there's a very detailed plan of how the multinational force will do that. It involves assembling -- many of which are assembled already -- and training a sizable police force and putting them in the island.

MR. BRINKLEY: Well --

SEC. PERRY: When that is accomplished, then it gets turned over to the United Nations peace-keeping force.

MR. BRINKLEY: Well, the multinational force is really not very multi. It's mostly American. Does that mean that we would have to stay there and do the police work that you're talking about?

SEC. PERRY: The multinational force involved 24 countries right now. So far, there are somewhere between 2,000 to 3,000, either police or military people, signed up for that force. That's a pretty sizable force, relative to the size that's needed in that phase of the operation.

MR. WILL: Many people believe that when, in the fall of 1963, the United States was in some way involved in the overthrow of Diem in South Vietnam, that then we really became comprehensively responsible for political life in South Vietnam, and they worry that this will be the case in Haiti. Now, let's take just the safety of Aristide. In one 72 year period between 1843 and 1915, Haiti had 20 rulers -- 16 of them overthrown or

assassinated. So, there's a tradition of political violence there. Does it become the United States' job to keep Aristide alive?

SEC. PERRY: Anything we're doing to establish democracy in this country, George, cannot depend on one person -- no matter -- as you point out, no matter how much confidence we may have in Aristide, nobody is immortal. So, we cannot depend on one person. We're depending on a Constitution. They do have a reasonable Constitution in the island. We're depending on a Parliament. They have a Parliament now. There will be parliamentary elections coming up in December. And there will be another presidential election coming up a year from December. President Aristide has already indicated that he will not stand for re-election at that time. So, there will be -- a key event, I think, in this democracy as to how this -- is the presidential election a year from December.

MR. WILL: I'm trying to understand, however, the American military mission here. Is it part of the military mission to provide for the safety of Aristide?

SEC. PERRY: It will be the responsibility of the security force -- the police force to provide law and order in the island. The military, once they have established, once they have neutralized the military regime -- forces which are already on the island, are there as a back-up to the police, in case they get into a situation out of their control.

MR. WILL: How soon do you expect this police force that -- I guess, we hear reports, as being recruited, part of it out of Guantanamo, this jerry-built police force -- to be able, without American forces, to contain any surge of violence and retribution that might occur down there? Won't the United States be sucked in, inevitably, into keeping these warring factions apart?

SEC. PERRY: That's a judgment call, George. But I think we're talking about a few months before we can have confidence in the newly established police force, in being able to maintain law and order. And the quick reaction military force we have to back them up, we can start phasing that out.

MR. WILL: Is it now the United States' responsibility to see, (A), that Aristide keeps his promise and does not run again, and, (B),

to make sure of the democratic hygiene of this election that will be coming up in, I guess, 15, 16 months?

SEC. PERRY: I believe that the key to the democratic established -- and the establishment of the democratic process on this island, are those two elections -- not just the election that's coming up in a year from December, but the --

MR. WILL: The legislature as well.

SEC. PERRY: -- legislative election that's coming up this December.

In the first one, the parliamentary election, we expect to still be there in some military force at that time. And, assuring free and fair elections would be one, certainly, responsibility. By the time the second one comes up, we would expect the U.N. force to have taken over our responsibilities long before that time. And that would be one of the functions of the U.N. force.

MR. DONALDSON: Mr. Secretary, there are reports that the United States' Drug Enforcement Agency wanted to interview President Aristide about allegations that he is somehow, or has been, involved in the drug business -- but was told that they couldn't do it. What about that?

SEC. PERRY: There have been uncorroborated allegations made by an informant about President Aristide. Those were investigated by the Justice Department -- thoroughly investigated by the Justice Department. Nobody was told that they couldn't do it. In fact, the Justice Department made a very detailed investigation of this. They concluded that the evidence did not support this allegation by one informant.

MR. DONALDSON: If I may just ask you one further question on it, to make certain that you include in your answer a report that we have that, just a few days ago, the DEA was told that they could not interview President Aristide.

SEC. PERRY: I have -- I'm not aware of that statement, but I do know that the Justice Department had looked very, very carefully at that investigation, and they've looked at it with complete integrity and complete authority.

MR. DONALDSON: Okay, may I ask now about the fate of the three generals? Clear up for us, if you will -- must they leave

the country, or must they simply step down from their present positions and stay in the country?

SEC. PERRY: They have to step down from their present positions. There's no practical way that they can stay in the country once that happens. So, they will be leaving the country.

MR. DONALDSON: Meaning, we will escort them out?

SEC. PERRY: The modality of leaving is under discussion as we speak, and I don't think I could contribute usefully to that discussion by commenting on it from a distance.

MR. DONALDSON: But you have nailed down, once again, that they cannot remain in Haiti.

SEC. PERRY: I say again, I do not believe that's a practical possibility.

MR. WILL: Suppose they're uninterested in the modalities we want to negotiate, and say, "We're just going to bicycle across the border into the Dominican Republic," there to be mischief makers. Is that a possibility, and would that complicate the American presence?

SEC. PERRY: Nothing that we've said, so far, would specify what country they might go to. We have not tried to nail that down. It might be a subject of the discussions today. I'm not aware of it being that, but we have not tried to nail that down.

MR. WILL: Are you at all worried about the fact that the American military seems to be drawn increasingly into the business of distributing welfare, of providing for humanitarian, worthwhile services to distressed people and collapsed, failed states, but it's not a military mission? And that this will compromise the ardor, the fighting spirit, the morale, the purpose of the American military?

SEC. PERRY: The mission which we have been ordered by the preside to prepare for, and which he may order us to execute, is a military mission. And if you had gone on the Mount Whitney and Eisenhower and the Wasp, and talked with the soldiers there, you would not have had any concern about their losing edge. They were very -- they are a finely honed edge.

MR. WILL: But it's after they're ashore and they become involved, really, inescapably,

in, if not nation-building, at least nation holding together, that that's really not what soldiers are for -- is it?

SEC. PERRY: Soldiers have always had a military police function. That's always been a part of the activity. We have combat soldiers. We have military police. We have engineering soldiers. Soldiers have a broad range of activities and responsibilities. We're not -- ought not necessarily talking about simply thinking of them as combat soldiers.

MR. BRINKLEY: Mr. Secretary, in very recent history, a leader of Haiti filled several trunks with money, fled the country, and went to Paris. Would that be a solution in this case?

SEC. PERRY: Again, we have not tried -- as a matter of policy -- to specify how they leave the country. We are very anxious that they leave, and our delegates -- the delegation down there is discussing the modality of how they might leave.

MR. BRINKLEY: Sam?

MR. DONALDSON: And are we going to pay them off, Mr. Secretary -- to us the common parlance?

SEC. PERRY: No.

MR. DONALDSON: Are we going to give them money?

SEC. PERRY: No.

MR. BRINKLEY: An airplane ticket.

Mr. Secretary, thank you. Thanks very much for coming. Pleased to have you. Come again.

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